



Wildland-Urban Interface

Professional Development Program

Natural resource agencies are being called upon to provide solutions to increasingly complex challenges at the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Communities are growing rapidly, landowners' management goals often conflict, residents may not understand the benefits of resource management, and the resulting risks to environmental quality and human quality of life are becoming more apparent. To help meet these needs, the Southern Group of State Foresters led a partnership with the USDA Forest Service, Southern Center for Wildland-Urban Interface Research and Information (Center), the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a WUI professional development program. This program will provide state and federal natural resource agencies with a set of flexible resources to conduct their own training programs, aimed toward building skills and tools to successfully tackle WUI issues.

Module Topics



Module 1: *Interface Issues and Connections*—Introduces participants to key wildland-urban interface issues and how they are interconnected. Explains why natural resource agencies should focus on interface issues.



Module 2: *Managing Interface Forests*—Provides tools and knowledge for effectively managing fragmented forests in the WUI. Includes practicing silviculture at the interface; small-scale harvesting systems; managing for wildlife, fire, and visual and recreational amenities; enterprise opportunities for landowners; and forest cooperatives.



Module 3: *Participating in Land-Use Decisions*—Explains land-use decision-making tools, the role of natural resource professionals in the decision-making and land-use planning process, and how natural resource professionals can get involved.



Module 4: *Communicating with Interface Residents and Leaders*—Discusses key tips for effective communication with WUI residents and community leaders, beginning with the need to understand the audience, strategies for effectively sharing information and planning programs, and working to resolve conflict and support changes in behavior.

Program Features

A team of agencies and authors from across the South developed and tested a set of South-specific training modules for federal and state agency in-service training programs. Because each state has different needs and opportunities, the modules are



extremely flexible. Resources can be modified and used in a variety of combinations to create 2-hour or 2-day training programs. The materials will be posted on the Center's website, Interface South (www.interfacesouth.usda.gov). Modules contain:



Background information for the trainer—Introduces the topic with key points for training emphasis, specific examples, ideas for presentation, references, and suggestions for how to combine the case studies, fact sheets, and exercises. Suggestions for locating guest speakers and field trip sites are included where applicable.



Exercises—Enable participants to discuss and apply what they are learning. Exercises can be modified to suit the group size; a number of learning formats are provided.



Case Studies—Provide examples of challenges and success stories from across the South. Discussion questions are included to facilitate deeper understanding and encourage dialogue.



Fact Sheets—Outline important points, strategies, and information for participants if they want more background material. They can also be distributed to other audiences.



Powerpoint Presentations—Enable trainers to easily present background information and introduce case studies and exercises.



Video—Introduces WUI issues and their interconnections to the public. Produced in conjunction with the National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This video goes with the materials in Module 1.

The professional development program is expected to be complete in the summer of 2005. For more information contact Martha Monroe, mcmunroe@ufl.edu, Annie Hermansen-Báez, ahermansen@fs.fed.us, or Lauren McDonell, mcdonell@ufl.edu.

Cooperators:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Auburn University, North Carolina State University, and Southern Regional Extension Forestry.

Partners:

Southern Group of State Foresters, USDA Forest Service, Southern Center for Wildland-Urban Interface Research and Information, University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

